



## Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108-1696

TEL (617) 994-6950  
FAX (617) 727-0955  
WEB [www.mass.edu](http://www.mass.edu)

Richard M. Freeland, *Commissioner*  
Charles F. Desmond, *Chairman*  
*Massachusetts Board of Higher Education*

### Commissioner's Recommended Priorities for Board and Department of Higher Education Work: 2013–14

---

#### Priority One: Regain momentum on all aspects of Vision Project work

This year, the BHE/DHE will renew our efforts on the full range of Vision Project outcome areas. The “Within Our Sights” Vision Project Conference on October 18, and the second annual report to be released at the conference, will provide momentum by showcasing the range of excellent work that is occurring across our campuses.

---

#### Priority Two: Initiate next phase of Vision Project—the role of strategic planning

**System-level Strategic Planning:** This year we will begin work on a system-wide enrollment plan to address the “graduate gap” identified in *Time to Lead*, the 2012 Vision Project annual report. The ultimate goal will be to identify an appropriate target number of graduates from public higher education over the next five years, with an enrollment goal for the system and individual campuses linked to that target.

**Campus-level Strategic Planning:** Activating the BHE’s statutory role in reviewing campus strategic plans is a key priority for this year. We plan to consult with the presidents as we think through how best to approach this work, and to begin by learning from campuses the status of their current strategic plan. This work will build on current strategic planning efforts, not require additional cycles of planning.

---

#### Priority Three: Advance collaboration and efficiency initiatives

The Partnership for Collaboration and Efficiency (PACE) is a collaboration among all nine state universities and fifteen community colleges, in partnership with the DHE. PACE’s goal is to reduce costs by increasing efficiencies, especially through collaboration among the campuses. A focus of this year’s work will be pursuing the strategic directions regarding savings in information technology outlined in a report commissioned by PACE and the DHE last year.

---

#### Priority Four: Institutionalize governance changes of 2012-13

**Office of Trustee Relations (OTR):** This year, the office aims to clearly establish itself as a viable and constructive addition to the state’s higher education system. In consultation with an advisory committee of campus board chairs, a solid plan of action has been established for the year ahead focused on communication, collaboration, information sharing and supporting local trustees with professional development activities.

**Guidelines for Presidential Searches, Evaluation, and Compensation:** These guidelines, passed by the BHE in June 2013, call upon DHE/BHE to play a more active role in these processes. We have been working closely with campuses that are involved in presidential

searches to ensure a strong collaboration. We are also utilizing the new guidelines for evaluation and compensation to guide the current round of presidential evaluations.

---

#### **Priority Five: Resolve pending issues related to DHE's regulatory role**

The BHE will need to examine a number of items that could impact our regulatory role:

- A BHE task force will examine jurisdictional and consumer protection questions related to our regulatory role for online programs offered by out-of-state institutions to Massachusetts residents.
- The BHE will examine legislation that has been proposed to end our program approval role for new programs for private institutions that have been operating in good standing for a number of years.
- The BHE will examine a proposal for a new reciprocity-based approach to regulating online providers that operate in multiple states.

---

#### **Priority Six: Continue strengthening of DHE organization**

The FY13 budget created a range of additional duties and offices at the DHE, and provided funding for a number of new hires to implement these new roles. The DHE will work to ensure this new capacity is used to its best advantage.

---

#### **Priority Seven: Enhance DHE's advocacy role**

We will seek to enhance the DHE's advocacy role by promoting greater visibility and understanding of system achievements and system needs, and strengthening communication with the campuses.

---

#### **Other Issues**

**Refining the community college funding formula:** This formula, developed through a collaboration of the community college campuses and the DHE, is well-launched but issues of fine-tuning remain.

**Exploring a funding formula for state universities:** The FY15 budget provides a natural context for considering the development of a formula for the state universities parallel to that of the community colleges.

**Establishing a Board policy on naming buildings.**

**Establishing BHE criteria for approving residence hall proposals from community colleges:** We intend to develop a draft of the criteria to be discussed by the full Board this fall.

**Higher Education Finance Commission:** The FY14 Budget called for a commission to make recommendations on what the state's commitment to public higher education should be, including program quality and financial support. The Secretary of Education or his designee will chair the commission. The Commissioner of Higher Education serves on it.